

REFLECTIONS '95

A Literary Journal of Gardner-Webb University



REFLECTIONS

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Literary Contest

Each year, the English Department of Gardner-Webb University sponsors a poetry contest for undergraduate student submissions in conjunction with the publication of Reflections. All works are judged anonymously. This year's poetry judges were Frank Bonner, June Hobbs, Janet Land, and Brad Southard.

Poetry Awards

First Place:	For My Father	Karen Brower
Second Place:	if the rivers	Charles Freeman
Third Place:	The Tunes of Memory	Chris V. Bridges

Honorable Mention

A Reply to Keats' "To Autumn": To Winter	Katrina Ogren
Am I Dead?	Heather Love
Changing Winds	Chris V. Bridges

Art Contest

This year, the Art Department has sponsored a contest for undergraduate student submissions. All works were judged anonymously. The art judges were Susan Carlisle Bell, Melissa Brown, Ford McDonald, and Ted Vaughan.

Art Awards

First Place:	Two Times Over	Sabrina Barnes
Second Place:	Peace	Mickie Norman
Third Place:	Untitled	Yasuhiro Mori

Honorable Mention

The Great Adventurer	Emily Johnson
Daily Bread	Katherine Ellison

Photography Contest

This year, the Communications Department has sponsored a contest for undergraduate submissions of photography. All photographs were judged anonymously. The judges were Susan Carlisle Bell and Ted Vaughan.

Photography Awards

First Place:	Jason Kerr
Second Place:	Jason Kerr
Third Place:	Brenda Ledford
Honorable Mention:	Shawn Childress



First Place

Jason Kerr

For My Father

Last night I dreamed that you were here again
You walked with me through the parking lot
and we went into the store together,
you with your arm around my shoulders.
We chased each other and disturbed the peace
like giddy little children.
And when you finally caught me,
beside the glass case filled with milk and juice,
You held me close, the two of us panting for air.
I saw that exhilarating smile creep upon your lips—
that smile I haven't seen in years
Your bright hazel-brown eyes crinkling at the corners.

I'll keep that smile with me
to think of when times get tough
And I'll use that smile to remember
that even though you're gone, you'll always be here with
me.
All this came to me last night
Oh, the power of a dream

Karen Brower

A Reply to Keats' "To Autumn" To Winter

Season of ice and barren trees, no mirth,
 Archenemy of the Apollo Red;
Wishing to block his freeing of the earth
 With winds that dance over lands of the dead;
Hoping the Chariot will fall down
 And the Sun will lose His child of the day
 To melt the ground, where His poor son shall rest
Though yellow's there to find, all else left grey.
 And still shadows grow along the bound path,
 No animals around for Buzzard's wrath,
 For Spring wants Death's victims' blood to be blessed.

Who has seen thee in melancholy light?
 Often they seek the Sun's reflection when
The true beauty of thy work remains slight.
 Thy art does not lie in the Sun's grand sin.
Day does not give glory to thee at all
 The Immortal Death comes with Spring's flowers
 Making thy own immortality weak
In return, three thou kill: Spring, Summer, Fall
 Shaking with fear you call Death by the hour
 To make your sisters shiver and cower
 Thou watchest them die with sympathy bleak.

Where do they await their return to earth?
 Forget them, thou hast to kill to live here,—
Icicles form sharply by new found mirth
 But cascade as water late in the year;
Then it is understood that tears come fast
 When the lake quickly melts and life is near;
 One of the three now awakened from sleep,
Thy own life into sleep's darkness is cast;
 Snakes recover and fill the land with fear;
 Once again, for one moment, it is clear—
 Death feeds on the life thou wishest to keep.

Katrina Ogren

Be There

The rain keeps falling in the cold winter air.
It's not quite cool enough for snow,
but enough to make me long for spring.

With no clothes for the wet
and little for the cold
all I feel is winter's hold
on my weak body.

Wet cold is the worst
for there is no chance to get warm
as the water pulls heat out
like a leech does the blood,
never to return.

My toes are numb and my fingers burn,
with only one flame left in me
to make me live on.

Let me find you again
when i can move on,
and you the same as I left
when I was still warm.

If not, I will return to the cold
with every flame that ever I left you
taken back in one hold,
and you left standing wet in the cold,
as my fire returns spring to my soul.

Stephen Wade Gamm

Unknown Factor

Why do I listen to the minstrel,
and not to the prophet?
Why do I pay attention to the jester,
and cast off the wise man?
I wait for my voice,
but what I really need is direction.
All of my feeble attempts to relate
have left me void and empty.
I have lost my self in search of position.
When I know there is purpose in the hands of the creator.

Adrian Brashier

Savior

Cross Hanger
 cliff hanger, my soul
 over hell;
Blood Shedder
 grace-shedding, my soul
 without hope;
Sin Bearer
 Guilt takes my soul
 reborn alive
Joy Giver
Joy receiver, my soul
 Jesus Child

Ken Lida

Glass Box

The girl sits patiently upon the steps,
looking, waiting to see the sights her eyes need to see
listening for the words her ears long to hear
and waiting for the feelings she doesn't have—
she is numb,
Numb to the harshness of the winter's cold wind
unfeeling to the cruelty of the human race
trying not to feel the burdening weights
which lie stubbornly upon her shoulders like a ton of bricks—
she does not cry,
Keeping it all inside until the pressure gets too high
and the glass box she has closed herself into
shatters into a million insignificant pieces
only to be swept up by the wind
and carried to the ends of the earth—
ESCAPE

Karen Brower

Have You Ever Reached Out?

Have you ever reached out
And was shut off like a water faucet?
Have you ever reached out
And felt like the boat was missed?
Have you ever reached out
And your cry was silenced like an unwanted
telephone ring?

Have you ever reached out
And you were scolded and you didn't
know why?
Have you ever reached out
And found it a waste of time?
Have you ever reached out?
I have

Gretchen Fritz



Peace

Mickie Norman

The Children and the Fire

They come to me bearing memories
of sounds and music, of lambs and lions,
of families, fun, and laughter, as well as
memories of myself, memories that had been
buried by the dragon of forget inside of a fire,
a raging and consuming fire which would not forget
me.

I once lost the fire and was free from its attractive
charm,
but the children brought it back, back from the dragon
and the place of its hiding, for they thought
that I without the fire was nothing,
that the fire and I were one,
We were not so.

I still remember,
remember the children and remember
their glory, remember their innocence, remember
their dreams of glorious fields, rainbows, and places
beyond,
remember smiles, sparkling eyes, joyous grins, and
their dependence,
undergirded by a fire, a fire whose time for
extinguishing had not yet come.

Chris V. Bridges

Growing Apart

No one ever told me,
No one ever let me know;
Enjoy your family now,
You'll part when you grow.

I wish sometimes,
For the unit we once had;
Where in the same house,
Slept R.J., Robin, Mom, and Dad.

These times are gone.
My memories must do;
But just to say I lived it,
This is a blessing too.

Robert Blair

Little Tommy and His Kite

Brother of the fields,
Your blonde hair shines in the sun light.
As you run, your T-shirt bubbles
To make room for the wind.

Friend of the yellow kite,
Your hand reaches for the clouds.
It is freedom that you give him,
As he plays in the treacherous wind.
It is freedom that you receive from him,
As you frolic in the weeds.

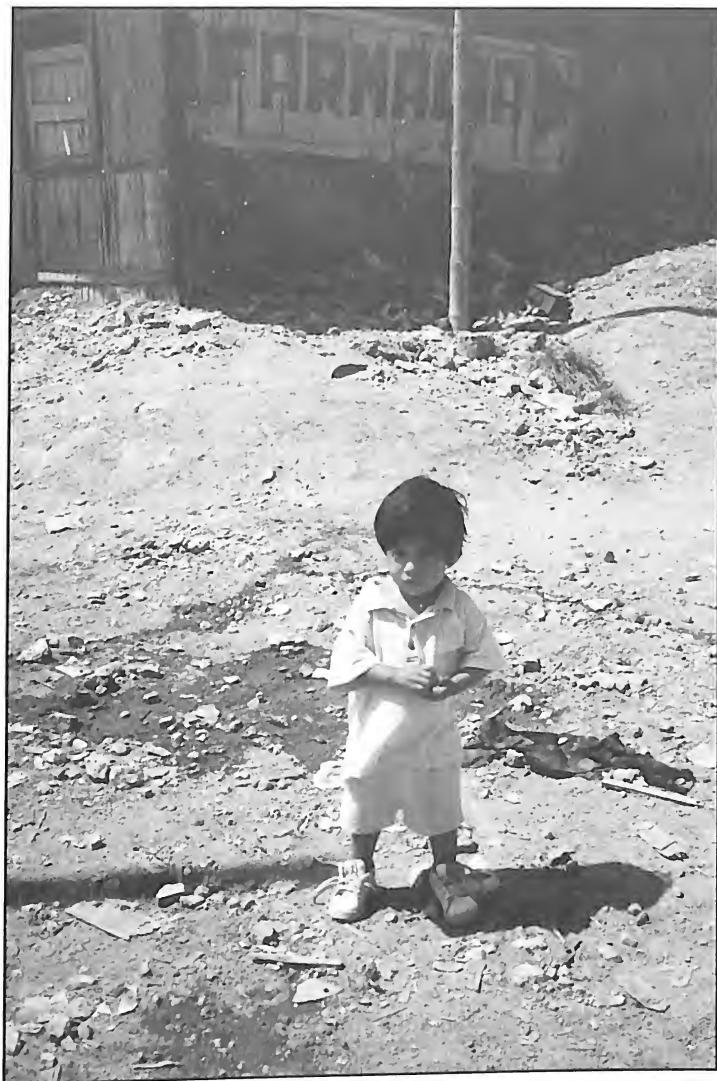
Son of alcoholic mother,
Son of abusive father,
Play while it's still light
And know you're in the eternal Father's hands.

Heather Love

So now what?
You've left me here again.
This glass and wooden siding I call "Hell."
I HATE You for not coming to my rescue,
And Myself for never letting on.
When younger I would cry and scream and beg
For you to never make me return.
Did you never wonder why?
Did you ever stop and think?
So here I sit again in eerie silence.
My heart is racing, yet the tears do not fall.
Why cry? The pain will stop tomorrow—

Except in my mind.
If I ran away he would just find me.
If I scream the punishment will be great.
If I cry out for help...but who will help me?
Daddy? God?
You two are supposed to protect me.
I know you have no idea—
So God, what's your excuse?
I'm left to protect myself.
The door is locked (he has a key)
My Mom is close (she is asleep)
I'll beg and plead (he has no heart)
I'll tell tomorrow (I have no courage)
Daddy, you're my only hope for Saviour—
My so-called "Saviour" hasn't helped me yet
Please Daddy, guess what is happening—
Please Daddy, I can't take much more.
Please Daddy, I'm not made of steel.
.....DADDY!

Anonymous



Shawn Childress

He who is

Looking into the distance
I see reflections
of those things which were to come
came
went
looking beneath me I
begin to recognize places
I was going
at
went
the rises
sets and spins we spin we go
why
looking upward
onward
into the arms
arms of He
who is he?
Unknown king
ruler
patriarch
deity
Yes
well, and no
He is
friend
father
idealist
trinity
"all for one and one for all"
He is mine
and I am his
resting gently in his hands
dangled
held through fire
storm
and blight
Only so to know
who He is.

Andrew H. Minneman

if the rivers that flow into the sea
could dream
what would they be
an ocean standing deep and wide
or a spring running down a mountain side

maybe a tributary that brings the flow
or an open delta that lets it go
perhaps the drain from a summer's rain
would all their dreaming be in vain

would it be the mud on an old
dirt road
or the dew on the grass that has been
freshly mowed
maybe the rain that falls from the sky
or a pain-caused tear that drops from an eye

that frozen water that cools a drink
or the annoying drip in a metal sink
fluffy clouds that float without a sound
probably the snow that dances to the ground

any of these it could possibly be
 what if the rivers were you and me
our lives and dreams may be simple and plain
 if we dwell in the most high
 our dreams
 are not
 in vain

Charles Freeman



Daily Bread

Katherine Ellison

Following a light into the tunneling darkness
Words change into hidden meanings
Assumptions never clarified—still believing
Willing to have permanent scars bearing love
Hanging onto phrases not intended for a heart to hear
Ignoring everything following the one bringing light to
 darkness
Words of compassionate friendship create a love that grows
And is shared in two different ways
When the darkness ceases and the one bearing light is
 uncovered
Eyes see their own imagination.

Aubrey Moore

My Best Friend

I waited for him to sneak up on me,
But he never did.
I watched over my shoulder for years (sure that he was
following),
But he never was.

I looked at the path ahead, it was empty,
And I felt lonely.
Then I felt someone take my hand
And there he was
Just like he'd always been.

Aubrey Moore

Am I Dead?

I used to hate learning my spelling words,
And double checking my multiplication tables.
Taking a bath seemed to be a punishment,
And I dreaded setting the table.
Now I have a hundred tasks.
I wonder why God listened
When I asked if I could grow up.
I thought he knew best.

The trees still wave at me
To challenge me to climb.
The sun's forehead peers out of bed
And asks if I can come out to play.
The water and the rocks laugh in the valley
And I feel that I no longer belong;
Not like the children whose job
Is to frolic with them.

I fear that my childhood has vanished
And before I can find that same simple lifestyle,
I will have discovered that I am already dead.

Heather Love

WHO I AM

They are who I am, not I.
They compose me, they encompass me,
as I do them.
They
are who I am.

They gave to me: themselves,
I kept what they offered
and gave the same.
They
are who I was.

They will continue to come, and steadily
will increase in multitudes
without ceasing.
They
are who I will be.

They, at their end will live
again through me,
as I through them.
They
are who I am.

Chris V. Bridges

This is the place in which I sleep
This is the place in which I see
This place is home
When I say home, I just don't mean the place where I eat
I also mean the place where I dwell
A place where the muggers the thieves the drug sellers
the rapists are all known well

This place called home
A place where I see
Little boys play the game of hide and go seek
Years go by and games do change
They no longer go hide from each other, the game has changed
To selling drugs on the streets
The rules are the same
They hide their drugs
They hide from the police
They even hide from other drug sellers
with whom they have to compete.

Where I live there's no white picket fence
There's no dog running in the yard
THERE'S NO YARD
There's drug dealers, thieves, homeless, and
people trying to steal your car.
Gunshots are fired
I think of them as my alarm

To wake up and get out of this society
To be free, safe, and away from any harm
Right now I'm not capable of doing this
I'm trapped behind bars
So now I can only see things
And go to sleep
Over the loud gunshot alarms.

Vas-Shawn K. Scott

Words will not come
To express what I feel
How I need to tell you
When the time is right.

Time is running short
The moment is coming
When I must say goodbye
(But it isn't good
It's lonely and cold)

Meaningless conversations
Thrown to the wind
Eager ears are no longer there
To catch them
They go unheard
Who knows where.

If things were different
If I was different
If time was forever
And so were we
If today could be the beginning
Not the end:

I'd probably do it all over again
And wonder if, how, and why
And still be confused
And you'd still be leaving.

Aubrey Moore

In Earnest

What became of the sacrifice of atonement
I offered the gods?
On its ashes
Grew the bitter leaves of wormwood.
They say for the body odour to go
The whole armpit must be washed.

Ndiangang Terence

Yet in Her Prime?

Lo! The harmattan hurrying westwards
Has chased the sunshine of early morn
And yonder the buzzing bee
The flower's juice has sucked.

Open your doors O woman
That I may espy
If the seasons of the earth
Have smouldered
The fire of your hearth.

Ndiangang Terence



Jason Kerr

Changing Winds

The same winds that
fly a kite, that
cushion the birds, that
guide the leaves gently down
also
are the same
that
bring in storms, that
tear down a mountain, that
consume tired sailors.

We too are at that extreme
in our humanity.
A most conservative stand
turns into a liberal fall, the
wrongest of wrongs becomes the
rightest of rights, the strongest leader becomes the
meekest follower.
Why should we, oh humanity,
criticize the winds?

Chris V. Bridges

Point of View

My mind slips into the past.
It's like a nightmare.
It grabs hold of me and won't let go.
I recall the sting of voices.
I am left a victim to mere opinion.
My strength is gone.
I crawl into a fetal position.
Does the present even exist?
I'm so tired of this.
I can not please the world.
I will please the one who made it.

Adrian Brashier

Drain

Draw a pen
let its blue blood smear across a page
What is left?
The crust of a thought.

Joshua Landry

My Flower

I will never be a rose...Roses are too beautiful. Too sweet, too perfect. They have thorns hidden by deception.

I will never be a violet. They have the air of mystery. Too dark—purple. Purple, dark blue. Too moody. Moody Blues.

I will never be a morning glory. I hate mornings; and I will never wither and die if the sun beats down on me.

I will never be a mum. There are too many petals. Too many facets. Are they each tiny individual petals or four big bumpy big ones?

I will never be a daisy. Too trendy. Hippies and Retros like them. So quaint, so published. They're on every Volkswagen bug windshield.

I will be a wildflower. Maybe a dandelion—simple. If you look hard, I am durable but tender. When I grow old, I will puff up into a cloud of dreams.

When the wind of life comes blowing, I will spread my dreams, wishes, hopes, truths, my touch everywhere. Somehow, my life's dreams will come true.

I'm not really a weed. I don't really need to be cut down. I'm just a reminder of how life and love and dreams ought to be.

I will never be planted. I will grow wherever I want and you will never kill me off.

Etta Castles

The Chosen Few

It was dark
Up on the hill
Throughout the palace
All was still

The knight approached
And mounted his horse
It was time to depart
For that long, dreaded course

The knight was captured
As the battles were fought
He must be saved
Or nothing is taught

Through the woods
The knight will ride
To the valley
Below the mountainside

Trudging onward
To save the king
Lost in thought
He began to sing

He was suddenly startled
By a frightening sound
He did not understand
For this was common ground

In the distance
He could plainly see
A fire-breathing dragon
Larger than the trees

He continued to ride
Prepared to attack
He knew he was in danger
For he could not turn back

He charged at the creature
With dagger in hand
He aimed for the heart
The dragon fell over the land

Closing in on the valley
He came to a brook
He paused for a moment
To take a long look
The once clear blue

Was now dark red
During the battle
Blood had been shed
He finally reached the valley
And sat on a rock
He observed his surroundings
Then went into shock

There before him
Lying on the ground
Was the king's sword
And his golden crown

The knight grew silent
He mounted his steed
He now must do
The dreadful deed

He rode back to the palace
And this is what he said,
"We are all abandoned now
for our king is dead."

He entered the king's chambers
And knelt beside his bed
Drowning himself in sadness
But tears he could not shed

He heard a voice behind him
Sternly made of lead
"Slowly turn and face me
or I will have your head."

The knight jumped up
And drew his sword
He found himself facing
His mighty lord

He bowed before the king
And wept at his feet
He should have known
The king could not be beat

He gazed out the window
At the moon's glowing hue
He knew that the king
Was among the chosen few.

Heidi Watts



The Great Adventurer

Emily Johnson

Black people walk tall
Black people walk with too much pride
Urban black people like to think they can
kick the hell out of the white man's hide
They live in the worst society
Where crime is very high
They wonder why they were born into these societies
To live their lives and sometimes to die

Black people walk with too much pride
Black people walk tall
Urban black people look for all the reasons why
their lives are going wrong
Blame it on the white man
He held us in chains
Now he has these agencies to keep us restrained
This is what the Urban black man's cry is
They claim they were never given a chance
Urban black people have pride; they can play sports and
dance

Black people walk tall
Black people walk with too much pride
Urban black people will never amount to anything
Unless they get off their asses
And help their own black hides.

Vas-Shawn K. Scott

QUESTIONS

Will you cry for those who have no more tears?
Will you sing for those whose song is sung?
Will you dream for those who dare not?
Will you live a life to honor those who died?

When the wolf cries his last,
When the eagle no longer soars,
When the rivers run of lost blood,
Will you seek to keep the circle closed?

As the sun wanes weaker,
As the moon fills the night,
As the darkness descends,
Will you be a guiding light?

Do you hear the unborn crying?
Do you see the earth is dying?
Do you feel the balance breaking?
And will you heal the wounded race?

Cynthia Picklesimer

Breaking Up...

Once you've been lured deeply
into another's eyes
reading almost every
flaring emotion

Once you've gently touched another's
perfectly exposed surface
with passionate force
that bleeds.

Once you've opened the inside
of your mind
for another to leisurely walk
among your
dreams.

Once you've given more time
and energy
than all the hours that
exceed a
lifetime of work.

And, once you learn to forget
yourself
long enough
to cry, laugh, and hurt
for another...
How can you go back to "Just Friends"?

Heidi Gardner

Prayer

Lord, if I told you that I love you,
would I be lying?
If I said just the right words,
would you be impressed?
If I said thank you for giving your life,
would I find peace?
If I got on my knees,
would that show strength?
If I cried,
would this be more sacred?
If I wrote this down,
would I remember this?
In the name of Jesus.
Amen.

Adrian Brashier

The Tunes of Memory

Born for another sky,
That would be the day we'd die.
Songs on a bus, oft not in key,
Tunes for him, and tunes for me.

Swings on swings and swarms of small,
why did we come here after all?
Rogues and roughs and rains and rights,
If not for His work, we'd give up the fight.

With a lone poet, the stranger and I
discussed questions of life 'til dawn was nigh.
A Genuine glance, we questioned with fear
and soon the time of good-byes came near.

Born for another sky,
That would be the day we'd die.
I'm glad memories are in one key,
Tunes for him, and tunes for me.

Chris V. Bridges

They say there is a God
But I do not see him
They say that he exists
But how do I know
He never answers My pleas
He never hears My cries
And you, they call you a hypocrite
You with the Bible in your hand
You, like me, will go to Hell they say
Because I do not believe in God
And you, the perfect one, is judge by all
They say life is great with God
My life is better without him
Why do you oh, preacher one say I will go to Hell
I thought that is where I lived now.

Mandy Mooneyham

I WAS BAPTIZED AS A CHILD
THAT DOES MEAN I'M A BAPTIZED ADULT
AS A CHILD YOU'RE TOLD WHAT TO BELIEVE IN
BY MOTHER, FATHER, OR GUARDIAN OF SOME SORT

AS I SIT BACK AND CONTEMPLATE ON WHAT I WANT TO BE
I WANT TO BE RICH HAVE FUN AND MAKE LOTS OF MONEY

WELL I'M AN ADULT NOW, AND THEY TELL ME THAT'S NOT
WHAT A PERSON
SHOULD BE
YOU SHOULD BE WHO YOU ARE
AND FINDING WHO I AM IS FINDING IF I HAVE GOD IN ME

IS THIS TRUE, WELL INTRODUCE ME TO GOD
IS HE JESUS OR THE ALMIGHTY ALLAH
IS GOD WHAT THE CHINESE OR THE HINDUS BELIEVE IN
I DON'T KNOW

A LOT OF THINGS CONFUSE ME
THE BIBLE; GOD'S WORDS RIGHT THIS MUST MEAN HE'S
THE AUTHOR
THE LIBRARIAN WASN'T SURE OF THIS
THE PICTURE OF JESUS
IN THE BIBLE I SEE WHITE CHARACTERISTICS
SOME SAY HE HAD SIGNS OF BLACKNESS
HOW CAN A PICTURE BE SO DETAILED
WHEN HE WALKED THE EARTH HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO
IT CONFUSES ME
SEE IT FROM MY PERSPECTIVE
WE'RE ALL LIVING BEINGS ON THIS EARTH
HUMANS ARE HUMAN-BEINGS
ANIMALS ARE LOWER-BEINGS
I SEE GOD AS A HIGHER-BEING
THE HIGHEST OF THEM ALL
WHY LABEL GOD A NAME
WE DID NOT CREATE GOD, GOD CREATED US.

Vas-Shawn K. Scott

MEN!

I do suppose they are necessary
Reproduction, Power, and Strength
Possibly an occasional laugh
A little pleasure here and there.

It seems to hold true
Until they manipulate you
Turning your world into black coal
Chewing your heart to spit up the soul.

First they'll bear red roses
Followed by a poem or two
Yet, others will have heard
Their cheap and deceiving words.

Yes, you may have them at first
The shiny spark in their eye
But, inside they will plot
Thus begins the first lie.

A killer test, late night at work,
Out with a friend,
And, who could ever be jealous of
Dear old grandma?

Oh! What a fool you will be
His innocent smile is all you'll see
Remembering that delightful first kiss
Afraid of what you might miss.

Be warned now, before it's too late
You'll gamble with your own fate
Don't play their teasing game
Or you'll risk the chance of pain.

Heidi Gardner



Brenda Ledford

My Room

A somber mood hung heavy in the musty air, weighed down even more by the constant darkness which is characteristic of this room, the room in which I live. Meager rays of light do try to trespass beyond the thick drapes but are discouraged by a gloomy atmosphere, so that the room remains in a dusky shroud.

I sit here quietly, listening to the gentle ticking of the clock which hangs on a far wall, I watch the shadows which surround me. They haunt me constantly, sinking into dark corners, peering out of every crevice and doorway, occupying the entire room, dominating it with their overwhelming presence. The shadows slink over the floor not only when night falls but even while the gleaming arms of the sun try to push themselves through my dreary windows. It seems that they will never leave me.

I hate them watching me, observing my every action. I can feel their gray eyes wherever I am, boring into my body, drilling through my tormented being. They try to capture me, relentlessly they pursue me, chasing me around the gloom that has become my life.

I try to leave them, but they always return to me, waiting until a peaceful smile crosses my mournful face, then they glide back into my room, my life. The shadows welcome themselves, drifting like a fog, hanging against rosy colored walls which turn ashen at their mysterious touch. As I live I try not to acknowledge their presence, but I am trapped by their strange persistence. They often lead me, moving around the small, young room in hypnotic circles, filling me with a familiar sense of dread and despair. It is during these times that I can feel my mind yearning to be with them, to become one with those that trace such strange and powerful patterns across the cold floor of the room.

The shadows then reach out for me, their misty hands groping into what little light there is left, trying desperately to find where I conceal myself. I hear them coming for me, their hushed whispers and low groans are inescapable, the search never ceases. Soon they discover me, ripping me from my place of refuge and then proceeding to pummel me down with fists made of memories and fingers of steel.

The beating seems endless, my throat is cut raw from my incessant weeping, though I know my tears will never stop them, but only feed their angry, fierce hunger. Soon, I won't be able to feel my body as all life will be wrenched from it. It is then that the shadows will finally enter me, pushing through my wounds, desperate to reside in my new hollow cavity.

Now as I sit here dying, I wait for the shadows to come for me again, I wait for them to beckon me with idle fancies. I sit patiently as time passes by and the cycle of my life begins once more.

Petra Orloff

Carolina Foothills High School Poets Awards

This year, Reflections accepted submissions of poetry from regional high school students. Having judged the submissions, the Reflections staff is delighted to announce the following winners.

First Place:	Hard Wood Floors	Robbie Lee
Second Place:	The Lobster Tank	Kevin Graham
Third Place:	Her Daughter	James Hopper

Honorable Mention

Words of an Alluring Blossom	Susan L. Cannon
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Hard Wood Floors

I rise from the hard wood floor;
My numb cheek tingles,
And the sun stings my eyes.
He's in the kitchen
Listening to the radio:
"Old Rugged Cross."
I would shut it off,
But my hands are tied.
Then he sees me—
Awake.

I wake from the hard wood floor,
My cold cheek rushes
Losing blood.
He's in the living room
Watching television:
Billy Graham crusade.
I would shut it off,
But my wrists are bound to my feet.
He walks to the door
Waiting for my retreat.

I glance from the hard wood floor,
My feet swell as I stand
Hoping that the prayer will end.
He's close beside me,
Holding my arm with bony fingers
Watching the pacing pastor:
Spitting hell fire and damnation.
I would shut them in,
But I can't move.
And the doors won't lock.

*Robbie Lee
Woodruff High School
Spartanburg, SC*

The Lobster Tank

He's dying,
a bit early, even for a lobster in a grocery store.
But, all the same, he's dying.
I assume he's ill,
and so do his pals.
They all pile up on the other side of the tank
to watch him die.
They don't like death, but still, it fascinates the hell out
of them.
He's all alone, probably just sitting there, waiting to die.
He must be different,
he looks the same as all of the others to me,
but he doesn't belong.
They watch him with wicked fascination.
But I think he's lucky.
A lone soul, he's dying slowly,
saying goodbye to the world we carved out for him.
The rest of them, having stuck together and imitated
each other,
will all burn to death
in the pot below the lobster tank.

*Kevin Graham
Ashbrook High School
Gastonia, NC*

her daughter

"i swear you were everything i had"
and
the days
now empty covered her
like blankets of silent memories—
old films
flicking, flicking—they ran over
and over.

and
the feeling she had
when she just found out and she
wouldn't, couldn't
 believe
it was true, the moment
she
was forced to realize
no matter how much she
wanted to change it
 she couldn't.how
she couldn't do anything
but cry.

"i'll mourn forever; it's my own
death too—"
i suppose all
wind
dies to you, and
the flowers and trees too.
the blue in the sky must be lifeless—

i'm sorry; i'm sorry
that everything was stolen from you
and that it's
possible everything could be.
i'm sorry a child's
laughter is now only an
echo of misery in your soul.

i'm sorry she was taken,
i'm sorry,
i'm sorry.

*James Hopper
Ashbrook High School
Gastonia, NC*

Words of an Alluring Blossom

O beautiful
butterfly
why must you
flutterby?
and leave me dying.
O favorite creature of the gods
your colors have entrapped my soul!
please—
that white daisy cannot see
you value half as much as I.
no, Mr. Butterfly,
I DO need you
come . . .
lie upon my flower
drink of my enchanting nectar
and sleep . . .
until you love me
more.

*Susan L. Cannon
Boiling Springs High School
Inman, SC*

The Swings

(dedicated to my grandchildren, Corey and Sarah—Summer 1993)

The swings are quiet.

As I sit on my deck overlooking my backyard on this early June morning, I notice with pain that the swings are quiet.

Their grandpa spent days readying them for Corey's and Sarah's visit—an inquisitive three year-old and eighteen month-old: New seats for the two swings, new chains replaced the old rusty ones, more cement to make it steady, new bolts, nuts, and screws replacing missing or rusted ones, wax paper for the slide to make it smooth and swift, and even an old bean bag at the bottom of the slide to prevent skinned knees—and possible tears.

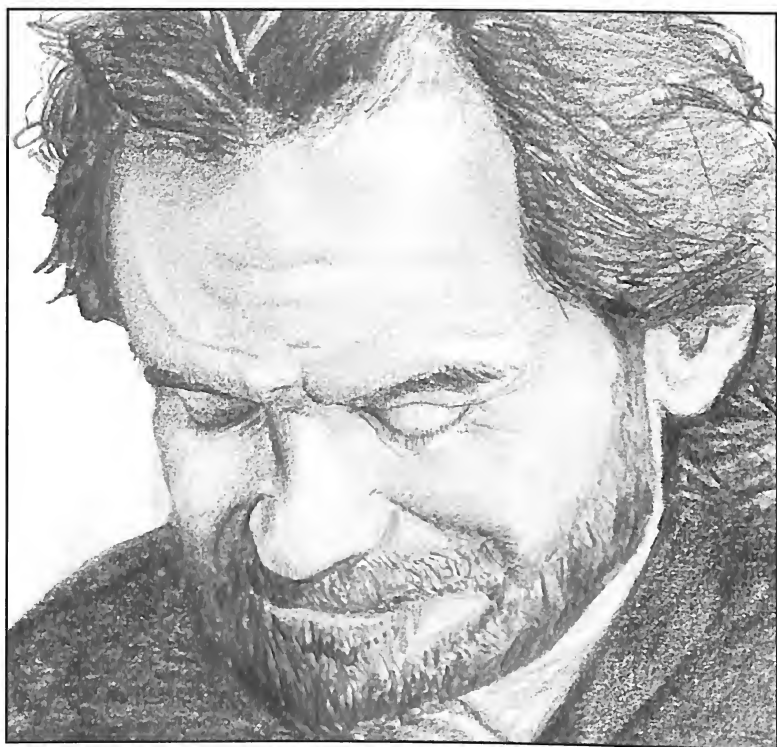
But now the swings are quiet.

For one week this summer the swing area in the backyard was filled with sweet laughter, the amazement of flying, echoes of "I want to go again!" and "My turn PaPa" and "My turn MeMa." Cries of "Help me!" Then later, "I can do it myself!" Beautiful eyes sparkling, little hands clutching and exploring, little bodies experimenting with different ways of sliding, climbing, and swinging. Corey proclaiming proudly that his "PaPa made this for me." It was a noisy, happy, busy place to be—that old swing set in the backyard.

But now the swings are quiet.

They've gone back to their home in Dallas, Texas. Won't be at Grandma's and Grandpa's for probably another year. So the swings are quiet. And all the bean bags in the world can't prevent the tears of this grandma on this June morning because . . . the swings are quiet.

Johnnie Hamrick



Yasuhiro Mori